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REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Actions dated December 3, 2002 and April 7, 2003. In the Action, the Examiner: (1) objected to the drawings; (2) rejected claims 1-6, 10, 11 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Peterson; (3) rejected claims 1, 7, 10, 12, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Calthrop in view of Peterson; (4) rejected claims 1, 8, 10, 13, 17 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Snyder in view of Peterson; (5) rejected claims 1, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Booth in view of Snyder and Peterson; and (6) rejected claims 15, 16 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Peterson in view of Dennington. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections and offers the foregoing amendments and following remarks in support thereof.

Claims 1, 10 and 17 have been amended. Claims 22-24 have been added. No new matter has been inserted. Claims 1-24 remain pending in the application. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the Examiner's rejections.

Applicant is enclosing a new drawing Figures 14 through 17 to overcome the Examiner's objection to the drawings. Upon the Examiner's approval of the drawings, Applicant will amend the "Brief Description of the Drawings" section of the specification to reference new Figures 14 through 17.

Claims 1-6, 10, 11 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Peterson. Claims 1, 10 and 17 now claim that the attachment of the first end to the second end of the body member define a single attachment area for the body member which is used for connecting the first member to the second member. Peterson fails to teach this feature. Peterson, shows at least two distinct attachment areas. A first area is defined by the first end of Peterson via slot 12 for attaching jug 15 and a second area is defined by the middle portion of strip 10 for attaching jugs 16.

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Additionally, a third attachment area is provided at the second end of Peterson via tab 13 and slot 11 for attaching jug 17. Additionally, Peterson fails to teach of the first end and the second end removably attached to each other as claimed by applicant. As seen in Figures 4a, 4b and 4c in Peterson, the first end of Peterson is merely attached to itself. As seen in Figure 4c, the second end of Peterson is merely attached to itself via slot 11 and tab 13. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully traverses the Section 102(b) rejection.

Claims 1, 7, 10, 12, 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Calthrop in view of Peterson. Calthrop is directed to a specially designed safety spring sling, which includes an extensible member that acts as a shock absorbing device. The suspension lines are directly connected to safety hook 4 and the harness is directly connected to safety hook 5. Accordingly, the entire teaching and purpose of Calthrop is contained within the portion that the Examiner is eliminating by the proposed substitution with the Peterson structure. Thus, the proposed combination destroys the entire teaching of the Calthrop reference and is improper. There is no shock absorbing device left with the Examiner's proposed combination.

Furthermore, it would not have been obvious to replace Peterson's multiple components shown as reference numerals 4, 10, 8, 15, 1, 6, 13, 2, 3, 12, 7, 14, 9, 16, 11 and 5 with Applicant's one piece soft link. This is further emphasized by the fact that the Calthrop reference is from 1921. Thus, Applicant's invention satisfies a long felt need.

Additionally, as discussed above in the Section 102 rejection, there are differences between Applicant's claimed invention and the invention disclosed in Peterson. Thus, even if the proposed combination was proper, it still fails to teach Applicant's claimed invention.

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Applicant also disagrees that Peterson teaches that soft links can be used to tie parachute suspension lines to the riser through the openings. Peterson fails to have any disclosure to parachutes or risers.

The Peterson embodiments shown in Figures 1 and 2 do not even securely jugs 16, if the strip or rope is turned upside down. Accordingly, these embodiments can not securely connect a second member, and obviously could not be used in the construction of a parachute/canopy assembly.

Lastly, Applicant respectfully submits that Peterson is non-analogous art and an improper reference for a Section 103 rejection. The Federal Circuit has stated that:

"In order to rely on a reference as a basis for rejection of an applicant's invention, the reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or, if not, then be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned."

In re Oetiker, 977 F.2d 1443, 1446, 24 U.S.P.Q.2d 1443, 1445 (Fed. Cir. 1992).

The Peterson patent relates to a strip or rope to make easier the handling of recyclable jugs. Peterson is not in the field of parachutes and canopies. The object of the Peterson patent was to provide an alternative to providing the jugs in a large holding container. Applicant's invention solves the problems of prior connector links requiring sewing and tools for attachment. Additionally, prior links contained metal hardware. Applicant's invention was directed to overcoming all of these shortcomings of prior links. Peterson is not concerned with any of these shortcomings. Accordingly, Peterson fails both portions of the Federal Circuit for analogous art and is not a proper reference for a Section 103 rejection.

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 7, 10, 12, 17 and 18 under Section 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Calthrop in view of Peterson.

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Claims 1, 8, 10, 13, 17 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Snyder in view of Peterson. All of Applicant's above comments regarding Peterson are incorporated by reference. Applicant disagrees with the Examiner's statement that Snyder discloses a parachute having a bridle cord. A "bridle cord" is a line that connects a pilot chute to the canopy. Snyder has nothing to do with bridle cords. Rather, Snyder teaches of a canopy design that eliminates the bottom sheet for better glide efficiency and reduced bulk. Accordingly, the proposed combination fails to teach Applicant's claimed invention. Thus, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1, 8, 10, 13, 17 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Snyder in view of Peterson.

Claims 1, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Booth in view of Snyder and Peterson. Applicant's above comments regarding Snyder and Peterson are incorporated by reference. Neither Peterson or Snyder have any discussion of bridle lines and thus Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's statements to the contrary. The invention in Booth is not directed to the attachment of the bridle cord to the pilot chute and canopy. Rather, Booth provides a complicated structure to deploy the main chute by the pilot chute. This structure require grommets and apertures. Even if the combination was proper, Applicant respectfully questions if Applicant's claimed soft link and attachment knots could be pulled through the grommet/aperture. Applicant also questions whether Applicant's claimed invention would interfere with the cone arrangement required in Booth. In any event, the proposed combination, still fails to teach of Applicant's claimed invention. Thus, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 1, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Booth in view of Snyder and Peterson.

Claims 15, 16 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Peterson in view of Dennington. Applicant incorporates by reference

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its above arguments regarding Peterson. Applicant has also shown by its last amendment, that Dennington is not analogous art and not a proper Section 103 reference. Furthermore, even if Dennington was a proper reference, constructing the Peterson device out of nylon, still fails to teach Applicant's claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of claims 15, 16 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Peterson in view of Dennington.

Applicant respectfully submits that there is absolutely no motivation, teaching or suggestion in any of the references for any of the Examiner's above proposed Section 103 combinations.

Applicant has completely responded to the Office Actions dated December 3, 2002 and April 7, 2003.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current Amendment. The first page of the attached pages is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made".

If there are any additional charges, including extension of time, please bill our Deposit Account No. 13-1130.

Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Thrice Amended) A soft link for connecting a first member to a second member, said soft link comprising:

a one-piece flexible body member having a permanently looped first end and a second end; wherein said first end and said second end are removably attached to each other to define a single attachment area for said body member and for connecting [connect] the first member to the second member.

10. (Thrice Amended) A soft link for connecting a first member to a second member, said soft link comprising:

a flexible one-piece body member having a permanently looped first end and a permanently looped second end; and

a non-metal tab member secured to said second looped end;

wherein said body member is constructed from a rope material;

wherein said first end and said second end are removably attached to each other to define a single attachment area for said body member and for connecting [connect] the first member to the second member.

17. (Thrice Amended) A soft link for connecting a first member of a parachute assembly to a second member of a parachute assembly, said soft link comprising:

a flexible one-piece body member having a permanently looped first end and a permanently looped second end, said flexible body member having a plurality of bartack threads; and

a non-metal tab member secured to said second looped end;

wherein said body member is constructed from high strength fibers;

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wherein said first end and said second end are removably attached to each other to define a single attachment area for said body member and for connecting [connect] the first member to the second member.

Please add the following new claims:

--22. (New) The soft link of claim 1 wherein once the first member and the second member are connected the attachment point of the first end and the second end of said body member is cinched.

23. (New) The soft link of claim 10 wherein once the first member and the second member are connected the attachment point of the first end and the second end of said body member is cinched.

24. (New) The soft link of claim 17 wherein once the first member and the second member are connected the attachment point of the first end and the second end of said body member is cinched.--.